

Pam-Malaysia.



Yesterday and To-Day in Malaysia.



YESTERDAY

Methodism was planted in Malaysia in 1884. Its pioneer missionaries, Dr. and Mrs. Oldham, were sent as South India's devotion to God and gratitude to America, to open a new mission in what then seemed the far-away island of Singapore. The missionary's wife was greatly stirred by the sight of hundreds of girls and women who seemed to be so much more accessible than those she had left in India, and when Sophia Blackmore arrived in 1887, the gift of Australian Methodism, woman's work was begun on a permanent basis.

The population of Malaysia is not confined to the Malay race. Almost every nation on the globe is represented in this cosmopolitan territory, and in particular there has been for a long time a steady

stream of immigration from China and the Tamils of South India. Thus the native religions are Buddhism, Hinduism and — among the Malays — Mohammedanism.

When Miss Blackmore arrived, she found herself confronted with two chief problems. One was a deeply-rooted prejudice among the Chinese and Tamils against the education and uplifting of women. The other was equally difficult to overcome, if not so deep-rooted. Among the class of Eurasian girls and women, from whom a great proportion of the teachers in the English schools of the East must always be recruited, she encountered a strong prejudice against a woman's earning her own living. No right-thinking, respectable young woman, who cared to lay claim to any social standing, would consider for a moment earning her living. No lady could think of it.

The missionary went quietly and patiently to work, and her method of meeting the first obstacle was another instance of Mohammed's going to the mountain. Wherever it was possible to find one, two or three girls who were even willing to learn to read, if their fathers could be persuaded to pay a small fee, a school was opened for them in their own homes and the missionary and her assistants went to that home day by day, teaching them to read, and thus opening the way for the truths that they wished to implant. These home schools became a distinctive feature of woman's work in Singapore, and thus, little by little, the wedge was entered against the walls of prejudice, and genuine progress has been made.

TO-DAY

The respectability of honest labor has not yet been fully vindicated in the East, but a great deal has been done toward lifting the standard of true womanhood. To-day many of the young woman of the class that was so afraid of losing social position in the early days, may be found teaching in mission and government schools, or even conducting private schools; others are stenographers, clerks or assistants in business offices. There is growing up a self-respecting, educated young womanhood that promises much for the future of the country.

Malaysia to-day is undergoing rapid changes in the development of its rich resources, and many Tamils and Chinese are flocking to the country. These are the missionary's opportunity, for many of them have been educated in the mission schools of India or China, and desire educational advantages for their children.

In Singapore, our Society is now carrying on a deaconess training school, a Bible training school, a girl's home and school, and a school for Chinese girls. Changed conditions in China are influencing the Chinese in the Straits Settlements, and education for girls is coming to be regarded as of great importance. The Chinese girl's school has been removed to a commodious new building and their former quarters are used by the Bible training school. Situated in the center of the Chinese section of the city, this will be a strong center for evangelistic work.

In Penang, school and evangelistic work are being successfully carried on. About five hundred homes are regularly visited by the Bible women.

Kuala Lumpur has a girl's school, housed in a beautiful new building. This school also gains its pupils largely from the Chinese. The music department is a delightful feature of this school.

The responsibility for a day school with one hundred twenty pupils, and for much work with the native churches, devolved upon the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society missionary at Taiping.

At Malacca we have a girl's school and much evangelistic work.

In Java our missionaries are devoting the most of their time to a training school for women and to evangelistic work, but are longing for enough helpers so that work for girls may be undertaken.

The Malaysia work is full of promise. Its crying need is for more workers and their support. Pray that these may soon be found.

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